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VINSON SUBCOMMITTEE BRIEFING

10 March 1964

CYPRUS

- I. Violence has erupted throughout Cyprus following adoption of the 4 March Security Council resolution.
 - A. Both sides appear to be trying to secure strategic positions prior to arrival of the proposed UN peacekeeping force.
 - B. The Greek Cypriots probably hope to establish control over the entire island, so that the UN force will be relegated to helping the police keep order.
 - C. The Turkish Cypriots are determined to prevent loss of their present positions and may hope to provoke intervention by Turkish armed forces.
- II. The Turks have massed air, land, and naval forces in the Iskenderun-Mersin-Adana area, just across from Cyprus.
 - A. They made a show of force on 15 February and again on the 27th.
 - B. The Turks have the capability to invade Cyprus with little or no advance warning. They have promised, however, "to consult" with the US before they move.

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- C. Turkish officials maintain that Turkey's right to intervene on Cyprus, as provided in the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, has not been negated by the recent Security Council resolution.
- D. Short of actual invasion, the Turks might try to influence the Greek Cypriots by another naval show of force, or by sending Turkish military jets on passes over the island, as they did during communal fighting on Christmas Day.

III. The Turkish Cypriots see the Turkish armed forces as their only effective guarantee against either Greek Cypriot attacks or absorption in a Greek-dominated state.

- A. There is growing evidence, however, that the Greek Cypriots regard the Turkish build-up as a "bluff."
- B. Latest reports from Nicosia indicate that failure of Turkey to intervene up to now to protect Turkish Cypriot lives has caused a decline in Turkish Cypriot morale and bitterness directed at Ankara.

IV. Relations between Athens and Ankara have deteriorated. The Turks have ignored repeated Greek complaints that the build-up in Southern Turkey is no longer warranted.

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- A. Greek forces are on alert and the Greeks are threatening to withdraw their contingent from NATO headquarters in Izmir, Turkey.
 - B. Greek officials have warned that their armed forces will counter any Turkish move against Cyprus.
 - C. Both NATO Secretary General Stikker and General Lemnitzer are actively trying to prevent the disruption of the alliance.
- V. The crisis stems directly from the attempt by President Makarios last year to alter the 1960 constitution, which in effect gives the Turkish minority--18% of the population--a veto over important legislation.
- A. Tension grew and--starting with a minor clash between Greek and Turkish Cypriots on December 21--has turned into widespread violence verging on civil war.
 - 1. The Turkish Cypriots have suffered the heaviest casualties.
 - B. The British have sent about 3,500 reinforcements to bolster the 4,500 troops who were already stationed in the two British sovereign base areas.

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1. In accordance with the 1960 treaty, there are also 950 Greek troops and 650 Turkish troops stationed on Cyprus. These contingents are not participating in the peace-keeping force.
2. The Turkish battalion, in fact, is not in its base near Nicosia but is strung out from Nicosia to Kyrenia in position to keep that road open for its line of communications.

VI. Secretary General Thant is running into problems in trying to implement the Security Council resolution.

A. The resolution calls for creation of an international peace-keeping force. This would include some -- possibly 50 percent -- of the present British force. Other countries are reluctant to participate due to (1) desire on the part of neutrals not to become involved in a possible Cold War arena and (2) the requirement that the nations participating finance their own effort.

B. U Thant has appointed Indian General Gyani as commander of the peace-keeping force, but he will not take over until he has troops from other countries in addition to Britain.

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- C. The Secretary General, in accordance with the resolution, proposed a mediator to seek a solution to the long-term political problem on Cyprus. His selection of Jose Rolz-Bennett, a UN official from Guatemala, has been rejected by Turkey on the grounds that he lacked sufficient stature.
- VII. The Turkish Cypriots are demanding partition, or a federalized state with exclusively Turkish cantons, as the final solution of the dispute.
- A. Most Turkish Cypriots who live in mixed villages have fled to larger Turkish towns. Some Greek Cypriots have also been forced to leave their homes. A refugee problem of major proportions is thus developing.
- B. Both communities are well armed. The numerical superiority of the Greeks, however, and their control over most of the coastal areas and ports have given them a great advantage in securing arms, most of which have come from Greece and Egypt.

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VIII. The Greek Cypriot Communists have attempted to exploit the situation by pledging loyalty to Makarion, by offering to join his forces, and by waging an intense propaganda campaign against the US, UK, and Turkey.

- A. One of Makarion's top advisors is a former Communist who is now active in the Asian-African Peoples' Solidarity Organization.**
- B. Thus far, however, the Communists apparently have not been given arms and will probably not be accepted by the Greek Cypriots forces unless Turkey intervenes.**

IX. The USSR is attempting to increase its influence on Cyprus.

- A. Its support of the Greek Cypriots in the UN debate and comments on the dispute by Soviet leaders have enhanced Soviet prestige among Greek Cypriots.**
- B. Following conclusion of an air agreement between Cyprus and the USSR in late February, AEROFLOT has opened regular service between Moscow and Nicosia.**

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- C. The USSR and other bloc states maintain large diplomatic missions in Nicosia.
 - X. There is considerable anti-British and anti-American feeling among both Greek Cypriots and mainland Greeks.
 - A. A Greek Cypriot press campaign against the "pro-Turkish" activities of the British.
- forces may be a prelude to a demand that the British pull back to their bases, or even leave the island.

C. The recent demonstrations in Greece against Britain and the US were in protest against alleged support by London and Washington for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots. Ambassador Labouisse has warned that good will for the US, built up over the past 15 years, is rapidly dissipating.

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